



Protecting Highway 20 and restoring the Skagit River

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There's a stretch of State Route 20 about three miles east of Rockport in Skagit County that's constantly buffeted by the Skagit River. The river erodes the riverbank and shoulder of the highway when it's running at or near flood stage. It has come close to washing out the road on several occasions in recent years.



Conceptual design: Engineered logjams line the riverbank along SR 20.

Emergency repairs

To keep the road from washing out, we've had to line the riverbank with large rocks through emergency-repair contracts in 2004, 2006 and 2007. Unfortunately, this is not the ideal way to protect the highway, but it's often our only option in an emergency situation. These temporary and costly repairs only put a Band-Aid on the bigger problem. Plus, they impact fish habitat.

Long-term solution

We want to protect the highway and improve the river habitat over the long-term. To do that, we're going to build what are called engineered logjams along the riverbank. The logjams are a combination of root wads, logs and concrete dolosse. They'll help buffer the highway from the eroding forces of the river, and they'll improve the river habitat for fish.

Work schedule

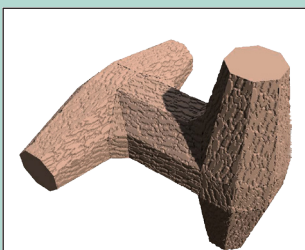
We began construction of this project in late-2013 by relocating utilities in the work zone and building a short section of temporary roadway to help keep traffic flowing while we work. The bulk of the work will be completed this year. We should finish by the end of 2014.

Building the project in stages

We're coordinating our project schedule around the fish, bald eagles, traffic and river levels. We will build it in stages to minimize impacts on Chinook and steelhead spawning grounds, and bald eagle roosting/nesting habitats.

Lane closures

We built a two-lane bypass road around part of the work zone because the equipment needed to build the logjams is so big. The equipment will block the entire roadway. There will be times that flaggers may help control traffic, and big trucks turning in and out of the construction zone may slow drivers.



Dolosse are like giant concrete jacks. They're used around the world, typically to stabilize marine shorelines.

Contact

Project Engineer,
Shane Spahr
1043 Goldenrod Road,
Suite 101 Burlington, WA
98233
360-757-5856

shane.spahr@wsdot.wa.gov



Logjams provide many benefits:

- Help build islands and gravel bars
- Increase pools for fish to hide and rest in
- Increase habitat cover and complexity
- Increase biodiversity in the river system
- Enhance the food web – retain nutrients and increase aquatic insect populations
- Increase survival of juvenile salmon by providing food and shelter

Native fish species:

- Chinook salmon
- Steelhead trout
- Bull trout
- Coho salmon
- Pink salmon



Boaters, rafters and fishermen

The Wild and Scenic Skagit River is popular with recreationists. We've taken this into account and designed the logjams to reduce potential safety hazards like undertows. Our design attempts to balance the needs of recreationists and the environment.



Bald eagles

The Skagit River is a prime-viewing area for eagles during certain parts of the year. We will work very closely with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to minimize disturbances to bald eagles and their nesting trees and communal roosts.

Unfortunately, we will need to use our parking area known as Roadside Park, which is a popular eagle-viewing location, as a temporary storage area for construction equipment and materials.

Learn more

We encourage fishermen, river guides and others interested in learning more about the project to call, email or visit our website for more information.

Website

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR20/SkagitRiverRestoration/>

Funding

The project is estimated to cost \$10.2 million, with the majority of the funding coming from federal sources.

Contact

Dave Chesson
WSDOT Communications
360-757-5997
chessod@wsdot.wa.gov

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